

1 JOHN W. HOWARD, Cal. State Bar No. 80200
2 JW Howard/Attorneys, LTD.
3 625 Broadway, Suite 1206
4 San Diego, California 92101
5 Telephone: (619) 234-2842
6 Telefax: (619) 234-1716
7 Pro Hac Vice Counsel for David Haight

8 LAURA SCHROEDER
9 Schroeder Law Offices, PC
10 POB 12527
11 1915 NE 39th Avenue
12 Portland, OR 97212
13 Telephone: (503) 281-4100
14 Telefax: (503) 281-4600
15 Counsel for Tom Reviglio

16 WILLIAM E. SCHAEFFER, Nev. State Bar No. 2789
17 P.O. Box 936
18 Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820
19 Telephone: (775) 635-3227
20 Telefax: (775) 635-3229
21 Local Counsel for David Haight

22 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
23 DISTRICT OF NEVADA
24 RENO, NEVADA

25 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	Case No: 03:73:cv-127-ECR-RAM
)	In Equity No. C-125-ECR
26 Plaintiff,)	Subfile No. C-125-B
)	
27 WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE,)	
)	
28 Plaintiff, Intervenor)	REPLY TO RESPONSES TO
)	MOTION TO MODIFY CASE
v.)	MANAGEMENT ORDER
)	
29 WALKER RIVER IRRIGATION)	
30 DISTRICT, a corporation, et al.,)	
)	
31 Defendants.)	
)	
32 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
33 WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE)	
)	
34 Counterclaimants,)	
)	
35 vs.)	

WALKER RIVER IRRIGATION
DISTRICT, et al.,
Counterdefendants.

The moving parties filed the instant motion in good faith. Their only motive was to get this case off dead center and to suggest ways to move it along so the residents of the Walker River Basin could get some answers sooner rather than later. Some of the responding parties agreed with certain of the moving parties' suggestions. WRID filed a particularly well considered response. All apparently agree that the Court should entertain suggestions as to how this case should proceed at this point. Perhaps the best way would be for the Court to appoint a committee of parties to develop suggestions for the Court. The Court attempted to do so once with regard to service issues but the effort fell apart when the Tribe's counsel, who was appointed chair, substituted out of the case. Nothing has been done since then on that subject. The moving parties will respond hereinbelow to the responses filed by the various parties but would suggest that this Court appoint a committee to make suggestions to it at the next status conference.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

Before addressing the objections voiced by the parties responding to the motion, Movants Haight and Reviglio believe it is important to identify the issues on which some level of agreement exists amongst the parties. There is almost unanimous agreement with regard to the proposal that the parties move forward with identification of the threshold issues. Mineral County has proposed that at the next scheduled status conference the Court could establish a

1 schedule for submission of proposals on the threshold issues and for deliberation of those
2 proposal's relative merits.
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4 The United States and the Tribe, jointly, (collectively referred to as "the US/Tribe") and
5 Mineral County agree that the parties can move forward on identification of threshold issues.
6 (Mineral County Response at 5, Tribe's Response at 2). Both Mineral County and the Tribe
7 submit that the Court could order a briefing schedule for parties to identify and submit a list of
8 proposed threshold issues to the court. (Mineral Count Response at 5, US/Tribe Response at
9 7).
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11 Walker River Irrigation District ("WRID") also agrees that an effort should proceed to
12 identify threshold issues but qualifies its agreement with the proposition that the Court should
13 direct the United States and the Tribe to disclose the legal basis for their claims first. (WRID
14 Response at 4). WRID reasonably suggests that disclosure of the legal bases for the United
15 States' and Tribe's claims is probably necessary to allow the parties to identify threshold issues
16 not already addressed in the CMO. *Id.* at 5. Given the concurrence of the parties regarding the
17 issue of moving forward with identification of threshold issues, Movants Haight and Reviglio
18 move this Court for an order instructing the parties to file proposals within 60 days. The
19 government also appears to agree that the Court should appoint a committee of currently active
20 counsel to develop a proposal for how to manage discovery and service issues. For that reason,
21 Haight and Reviglio ask that the Court also order the creation of the committee with directions
22 to develop suggestions by the next status conference.
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26 Mineral County and the government otherwise oppose the instant motion to which
27 opposition the moving parties respond as follows:
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OPPOSITION OF MINERAL COUNTY

Apparently, Mineral County did not bother to read our motion before opposing it. We have no way of otherwise explaining why it has posed a series of arguments in its opposition that are so at variance with that for which we have moved. In addition, it has flagrantly and egregiously misrepresented to this Court what is actually occurring at this time with respect to out of court “negotiations”.

Mineral County argues that granting the instant motion would result in “redundancy, delay, confusion and unnecessary additional burdens on the parties”. The motion, on the other hand, has set forth a detailed suggestion for how all of that can be avoided. Indeed, those proposals take up the greatest part of the moving parties’ argument. In the motion Reviglio and Haight suggest that with document discovery carried out by web posting, all documents could be produced just once rather than multiple times. Redundancy and “additional burdens”, as the motion points out, can be avoided by prohibiting all parties from requesting any document that has been posted to the website and could impose sanctions on those that do. Redundancy and “additional burdens”, as the motion points out, can be avoided by having responses to interrogatories posted to the website and sanctioning anyone who serves an interrogatory that is duplicative. Much of the point of the motion is to suggest a means for preventing redundancy and reducing the burden on the various parties. Contrary to Mineral County’s assertion, it would be redundant to conduct discovery in any other way. Once everyone is served, everyone will have the right to propound discovery and that is when redundancy will explode and each party will be put to the task of preparing and propounding its own discovery, geometrically increasing the likelihood of redundancy and increasing the burden on everyone. It will explode, that is, unless something along the lines of the procedure we have suggested is

1 implemented. And if that procedure is going to be implemented, what difference does it make
2 if it is implemented now or when service is complete? The result will be to order discovery and
3 prevent duplication so there would be no excuse for not getting started.
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5 As for delay, it is hard to fathom how actually getting the case moving in some way will
6 somehow promote delay. To the contrary, allowing document discovery and getting the parties
7 to state their respective legal positions will advance, rather than delay, the case and will get it
8 moving in a way that means that once all parties are served, the case can move forward in
9 earnest. The only way the case can be further delayed is by continuing to do nothing, as
10 Mineral County suggests, until service is complete. And given the fact that after seven long
11 years service shows no signs of being complete (unless, of course, this Court sets a date for
12 completion, as we have suggested), who knows how much longer that would be? The fact is
13 that if the parties are allowed to start doing things, those attempting to effect service might be
14 incentivized to get it done a little more promptly. So much for Mineral County's protestations
15 of delay.
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17 Mineral County's assertion that there is an ongoing "process of meetings and
18 negotiations" with respect to the issues presented by this case is false. The moving parties have
19 checked with other parties and no major parties are participating in an ongoing "process of
20 meetings and negotiations" on these issues. Apparently, unbeknownst to the moving parties
21 and other major parties to this action, Senator Reid's office has engaged in some informal
22 meetings with unknown people regarding unknown issues but has not included in those
23 discussions thousands of stakeholders and major parties to this action. This informal effort
24 falls far short of being a formal "process".
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1 In addition, however these activities can be characterized, they have not been disclosed
2 to the Court heretofore and hardly qualify as another track of this litigation that somehow
3 disables Mineral County from actually doing some work to advance this case. And if service
4 were completed tomorrow, how, then, would Mineral County avoid the litigation process?
5 Would it ask for a stay so informal meetings between unknown parties on unknown issues
6 could proceed without the participation of the major litigants herein? It seems unlikely that this
7 Court would entertain such a further delay under those circumstances. The point is that
8 whatever these meetings are, they are not an alternate track of this litigation that can, or should,
9 be considered in determining whether or not it is appropriate for the parties to be allowed to
10 move the case along.
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12 And, in any event, how does activity on the part of the litigants herein have any impact
13 on Mineral County which, to our knowledge, has not yet formally joined this litigation? At last
14 look, Mineral County had applied for, but not yet been granted, intervenor status.
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16 Moreover, if these informal meetings are intended to be comprehensive negotiations, as
17 Mineral County suggests, it is odd that hundreds of stakeholders have not been invited. And,
18 that being the case, it is unclear how we ever would have known of them and what relevance
19 they might have to the instant case. This case will not be settled without the participation of all
20 stakeholders and unless they are made a part of a negotiating process, these parties, and the
21 hundreds (if not thousands) of stakeholders similarly situated, will resolve this case by fully
22 litigating it rather than by settlement. The likelihood that these unknown meetings will resolve
23 any of the issues before this Court, let alone "most if not all of them" is ridiculously slim absent
24 the involvement of the many stakeholders who have neither been invited nor participated in
25 them. It is a shame that Mineral County has chosen to so misrepresent to this Court Sen. Reid's
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1 informal meetings as to suggest that they will “resolve most if not all of the issues presented in
2 this case”. For Mineral County, then, to warn this Court that it should be wary of modifying
3 the CMO “in such a way as to subvert those parallel negotiations” is beyond misleading. How
4 the Court can be expected to avoid subverting meetings of which it has not been made aware is
5 left unexplained by Mineral County.
6

7 Moreover, it is hard to square Mineral County’s opposition to most of the suggestions in
8 the instant motion with its concession that the CMO contemplates some activity, such as setting
9 a schedule for the completion of service and determination of threshold issues. Allowing
10 document discovery would assist in determining and fleshing out the threshold issues, as would
11 requiring that the parties disclose the legal theories they intend to assert in pursuing their cases
12 herein. If, as Mineral County concedes, the CMO contemplates the identification of threshold
13 issues, surely, it also contemplates the parties’ having access to the instruments that will enable
14 them to do so, such as document discovery. Surely, too, it contemplates having the parties be
15 sufficiently forthcoming to disclose their legal theories. Clearly, lacking that, attempts to
16 determine the threshold issues are simply shots in the dark. That is why document discovery
17 should be allowed to proceed once a system is in place that will prevent duplication and
18 redundancy.
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21 It is clear from its opposition that Mineral County has little interest in moving its case
22 along and, apparently, every intention of extenuating it. We have no objection to Mineral
23 County’s case languishing forever, if that is what it wants. But it is not fair to the actual parties
24 to this litigation, C-125-B, to allow Mineral County’s desire for lethargy to affect those in other
25 cases who would like to get on with it and its position must not be encouraged. It bears
26 pointing out, too, that it was Mineral County’s withdrawal from the original mediation, among
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1 others, that ended that mediation and the formal negotiated effort it represented. So, it is a little
2 cloying to see Mineral County now resist efforts to get this case, to which it is not a party, on
3 track.
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5 OPPOSITION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

6 The government's opposition herein is remarkable for several reasons. It begins by
7 admitting that it made (at least two) motions similar to the instant one some years ago only to
8 have the court deny them to avoid prejudice to unserved stakeholders. Presumably, the
9 government had a good faith basis for its motions in accordance with Rule 11. So, one must
10 question how it can be that it had a good faith basis for making those motions at the same time
11 as it opposes this one. Perhaps the government's good faith can be gauged by the fact that
12 when it sought the right to bring dispositive motions, virtually no stakeholders had been served
13 and were parties to this action. Perhaps the Court's reluctance, at that time, then, to grant the
14 Tribe and the government the right to make dispositive motions rested in the fact that almost no
15 one had yet been joined in the case so there was not much by way of opposition. However that
16 may be, we must presume that one cannot, in good faith, at once, advocate early dispositive
17 motions when it is its idea and oppose it when it is another party's idea.
18

19 What a difference ten years makes. Now there are numerous parties and, certainly,
20 some, such as the moving parties herein, who are prepared to vigorously pursue this litigation
21 and offer defenses to the Tribal and government claims. That is why the instant motion should
22 be granted even though the government's premature motions along the same lines were not.
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24 The government refers to the current CMO as if it were a holy writ. It isn't. It is an
25 order. What is more, it is an order that, by its own terms contemplates change to respond to
26 changes in the facts "on the ground". This case has been pending for a decade. In spite of the
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1 fact that the government's effort at service is excruciatingly slow, it appears that it may be
2 coming to an end. To that end, this Court should set a date for completion of that service. The
3 government counts every citizen in the nation every ten years. It should not take that long to
4 identify and serve a tiny sliver of that population with process from this case.
5

6 Technology, too, has progressed during that time and it affords the court the ability,
7 now, to, at once, allow activity that might, previously, have prejudiced unserved parties and, at
8 the same time, protect all parties from any conceivable prejudice by reason of redundancy and,
9 also at the same time, move the case forward. Perhaps some parties are content to let this case
10 languish endlessly. Perhaps some do not mind that this case shows every sign of continuing
11 until a date long after we all retire. But we believe our clients are ill-served by permitting that
12 to happen. The people of the Walker River Basin need and deserve resolution. They need to
13 know that they will have water available for population and economic expansion.
14

15 Since it is the most controversial part of the instant motion, perhaps we should, for the
16 sake of this discussion, put off consideration of the propriety of dispositive motions and focus,
17 instead, on those activities that can be undertaken without any conceivable prejudice to any
18 party if done in accordance with the moving parties' suggestions.
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20 Initial disclosures of legal theories should not be that difficult and should certainly not
21 be disruptive. We must presume that the government and the Tribe had a legal basis for their
22 complaints herein as required by Rule 11. What, then, is the big secret? Why is it so difficult
23 for them to tell us what they are? It is not as if that disclosure requires a full on brief. It should
24 be able to be done in a few sentences and the result would be that issues could begin to come
25 into focus. Without that, all parties are left with the bare complaints and nothing else. As
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1 pointed out by WRID in its response, the threshold issues cannot be narrowed, or even
2 completely identified, until the Tribe and government finally tell us the basis for their claims.
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4 To the government's argument that it is premature for parties to disclose legal theories
5 until answers are filed, these defendants are fully prepared to immediately file answers, if that
6 is all it would take to get the government to tell us all the basis for its suit. Again, if the
7 disclosures are posted to a website accessible to all actual and potential parties, early disclosure
8 would prejudice no one. Certainly not the government and Tribe which already know their
9 own theories. And certainly not unserved parties, who would have immediate access to that
10 information once served. Presumably, the theories would not change with the addition of
11 additional parties. So, where is the prejudice?
12

13 On the issue of document discovery, as observed in the motion itself and in this Reply
14 hereinabove, providing for the posting of document requests, responses to document requests
15 and the documents themselves on a dedicated website, together with the preparation and
16 posting of indices thereof, will not only not result in redundancy and burden but will
17 affirmative prevent them. Certainly, if a process like the one proposed in the instant motion is
18 not in place by the completion of service, the ensuing chaos of competing discovery requests
19 served by all who will have an absolute right to serve them, will geometrically increase the
20 potential of redundancy and burden. And if the system proposed by the moving parties herein
21 (or something very much like it) will be implemented eventually, what difference does it make
22 if it is implemented now or when service is complete?
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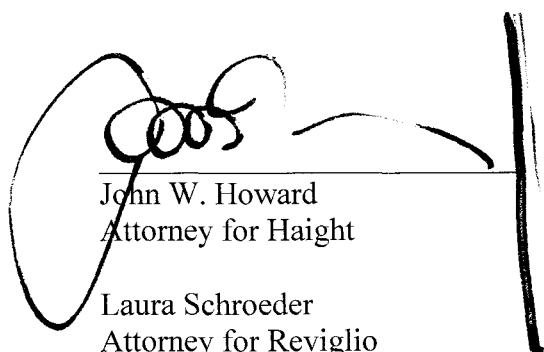
24 That is why this Court should grant the instant motion at least to the extent of: (1)
25 setting a date for the completion of service (2) starting the process of identifying Threshold
26 Issues; (3), requiring the government and the Tribe to disclose their legal theories; and (4)
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1 allowing all parties document discovery once a system is in place that will ensure that
2 duplication will not occur.
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4 The moving parties also suggest, again, that the Court immediately appoint a committee
5 of currently active counsel to devise a method through which discovery and service may be
6 accomplished that will protect the rights of all litigants, present and future, and to develop a
7 system that will ensure that duplication will not occur. This is the one area in which the
8 moving parties and the government appear to have some agreement and something the Court
9 attempted to do more than a year ago. After Alice Walker left the case, the effort collapsed and
10 nothing further, to our knowledge, was ever done in this regard.
11

12 People are moving into the affected area every day. Population is increasing without
13 anyone's being able to know, for certain, that the population gain is going to be supportable
14 with sufficient water. As long as this case is pending, no one can make legitimate long term
15 plans because no one can be certain that there will be water available to them for growth. This
16 case has been pending for a decade without even the completion of service. It is time to get it
17 moving in a productive way.
18

19 Dated: May 23, 2007
20


21 John W. Howard
22 Attorney for Haight

Laura Schroeder
23 Attorney for Reviglio
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